

**OUTDOOR MEDIA ASSOCIATION – DRIVER BEHAVIOUR
RESEARCH LAUNCH
MEDIA Q&As**

1. What is ‘dwell time’ and how do you arrive at an optimum of 6 – 10 seconds dwell time?

Dwell time is the time one ad is displayed on a digital sign before changing to the next.

Currently, the dwell time regulation for digital roadside signs varies markedly across Australia, from 10 seconds to over one minute. Government-owned digital road message signs usually operate at a four second dwell time.

Like all businesses, the Out of Home industry needs certainty and consistency when it comes to government regulation. Reasonable, evidence-based and consistent regulations allow the OOH industry to sell a more attractive product to advertisers, and with 50% of industry revenue returned to Governments and other landlords, good results for the industry mean more revenue for government and more jobs for Australians.

Digital roadside advertising has been operating safely across Australia and the world for decades. Look at Times Square and Piccadilly Circus, major tourist attractions that straddle complex and multifaceted intersections which have been safely lit with massive digital displays for decades.

Tens of thousands of dollars are invested in a proposal for a digital sign – on traffic engineers, heritage consultants and lighting experts. Then, hundreds of thousands are invested to build a sign that is safe, weather resistant and fits within the urban landscape. With investments like this, it does not make sense for the Out of Home industry to propose signs or regulations that are not safe. Apart from our responsibilities to the community, government stakeholders, and company shareholders, advertisers won’t advertise on an unsafe sign.

The OMA advocates for reasonable, evidence-based regulations. For the last decade, we have had a program of research into driver behavior in the presence of digital signs to ensure we provide a strong evidence base for any regulatory change. We put our money where our mouth is to fund research with a view to busting some of the myths around digital signs and driver distraction. The OMA is dedicated to ensuring any dwell time standards that are adopted are evidence-based and driven by best practice, while honouring our commitment to working in partnership with authorities to ensure road safety requirements for outdoor advertising.

2. What was showing on the billboards during the ARRB study?

Standard advertisements that would be showing on any digital billboard throughout Australia. That is the valuable thing about this study – these are real signs operating in a real-world environment with real drivers passing them throughout the day.

3. Will you replicate the study in NSW/Victoria/SA?

To replicate this study in other states, we need approvals for new digital signs so that we can measure driver behavior before and after the sign is erected. We do have additional research planned for later this year that will provide greater insight into the neuroscience behind the impact at Out of Home.

4. Because road and traffic conditions are so different in cities, how can the results of a Queensland-only study in regional areas be applicable nationally?

The Surfers Paradise site is a busy multi-approach intersection. The OMA's previous research conducted in Brisbane showed similar results. The last study by Main Roads WA was on a major freeway.

5. You haven't measured any capital cities – wouldn't the results be different simply because of increased traffic on the roads?

The two intersections were chosen because we had permission to build digital signs there. That 'before' and 'after' measurement was crucial to ensuring we had the best understanding of the impact of a digital sign on the behaviour of drivers.

6. How many vehicles were counted at each of the times videoed?

It measured every single vehicle travelling on these roads over four weeks.

7. What are you hoping for from the Government as a result of this study?

We aim for more consistent, reasonable, evidence-based regulations around dwell times.

8. Are there too many billboards on our roads?

Every billboard on all Australian roads is approved by the relevant local councils. Signs give back to government and the community through revenue generation, delivering infrastructure such as bus shelters and pedestrian bridges, and by showing important government tourism and health campaigns.

9. What's the difference in driver attention between digital and paper/static billboards?

This study did not cover this matter. However, previous studies have shown that regardless of if the sign is digital or static, drivers keep their eyes on the road 78-80% of the time.

10. What is the Out of Home industry worth in ad revenue and is it growing?

The Out of Home industry is worth just shy of \$1 billion and has been steadily growing in revenue terms by more than 10% year on year. It's also important to note that \$1 out of every \$2 in revenue is returned to governments and other landlords in rent and taxes.

11. What is the average number of billboards a driver might see along a main road in each state?

People see an average of 30 Out of Home signs each day, which includes billboards, bus sides, train wraps and signs in stations, street furniture, and any other digital or static sign they may see when they are out and about.

12. The City of Melbourne is trying to ban the size of ad panels on the new Telstra pay phone structures. Would this potentially happen with roadside billboards?

A large sign at the roadside represents a clear and easily visible sign.